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did not know anything about the engraver's technique. I simply bought a few books on etching, studied them, bought the material, experimented, and I eventually made some etchings as good as anybody else."

"What do you think about art criticism? Quite a number of our artists are of the opinion that art criticism should not exist at all."

"That is another complex question. Art critics should be men of taste. What is journalism? The Voice of the People. The public talks about pictures, praises and condemns, why should not the critics do the same? but they should be men of taste. Never artists; they are bad critics. No art criticism should exist."

Then M. Raffaelli asked me a question:

"Have you heard any artists' opinion on my work. Yes? What impression did I make on them?"

"I have defended you several times."

"Then they attacked me?"

"Yes; some said, your art was insolence. They could do it themselves. This was only the beginning of art. No high art like Abbey. They all agreed, however, that you are a man of brains. They seem to overlook that you have created a new style of technique for yourself."

"Yes, they now call me the most original of French painters. And the public of France acknowledges it, also the rest of Europe. They think my art is no high art? Well, it seems to me that to *elevate* a commonplace subject is most difficult, the true art."

"I am sure, M. Raffaelli, that all connoisseurs consider you the foremost painter of street scenes. They do not only admire your wonderful knowledge of Parisian life of to day, and your power of creating a most truthful impression of every place, but also that you give to every scene the spirit that pervades it, either from historical reminiscences or modern usances; for instance, one of the *grand Boulevards* you paint gay, in bright sunlight, the Pantheon sombre, the Jardin de Luxembourg empty of former glory, a by-street of Paris in a dull melancholy light, and the yard of a hospital with an atmosphere as thin and frugal as the diet of the promenading convalescents."

Before I left, M. Raffaelli arranged with me a slumming expedition through the poorest quarters of this city (every bit as interesting as Paris), of which I may speak some other time.

ALDEN WEIR (who lately had an exhibition at Boussod, Valadon & Co.) appears different with every year. What a change from the delicious, ethereal flower pieces at Inglis' private gallery to the rough and masculine "Gen. Gilmore." Alden Weir is an experimenter, yet his experiments are sincere and therefore far superior to those of the Tarbellites. A remarkable picture is his "Captain Zilinski;" it is refreshing in its naive, brutal strength, so suitable to the subject: the inventor of that murderous weapon, the dynamite gun. Even without knowing the sitter, you might vouch that it is a striking likeness,—even more than a likeness, as it gives us the environment in which this man is living as well as Alden Weir's comment on it; the streak of vermilion of the coat lining is a *bravura* touch.

PHILADELPHIA can be proud of possessing Thomas Eakins. Among our mentally barren, from photograph working, and yet so base, sweet caramel artists, it is refreshing, like a whiff of the sea, to find at least one rugged, powerful personality like Thomas Eakins. How crude his art is at times we see in the startling effect of blood in Dr. Gross's right hand. Eakins can never hide the calm and keen, perhaps brutal observation of his anatomical researches. How grotesque his art can be, we find out in looking at the lean anatomical study of Christ on the Cross—the strangest and strongest Crucifixion ever made in this country. Eakins' work may be, here and there, too severe to be called beautiful, but it is manly throughout—it has muscles—and is nearer to great art than almost anything we can see in America.

THE Decadence has also made its appearance in American painting. On my various wanderings through American studios here and abroad, I ran across it now and then, but it generally impressed me like a haphazard intimidated attempt (for instance Paxton's in Boston), not as a self-reliant fact. In Henri of Philadelphia, however, decadence furnishes the leading characteristic of his work. Hitherto he has painted two subjects well. First: beach scenes, perspective views of piers and stretches of sand, empty or crowded by a variegated throng, always under the blazing sun—that look like caskets of jewels, or out-of-door effects à la Monticelli. Second: a certain type of woman bred by his imagination; originally, I suppose, descendants of the Fur Jacket and Yellow Buskin ladies. They are usually dressed with Whistleresque simplicity in a dark greenish blue that reminds one of snakes. They have the peculiar habit of placing the lamps in their Bohemian boudoirs on footstools or on the floor, causing their faces to be illumined like Irving in The Bells. The most remarkable characteristic in them is their face; their features taken one by one are perhaps not much out of the ordinary, yet the whole expression has something morbid, hectic, vampire-like about it,—it impresses like a nightmare, resembles nothing in particular—in short, is *Henriesque*. He asserts that he actually sees things as he paints them, possibly, possibly. I only know that if Henri would paint himself just as he appears to me, the portrait would make a fit companion to his nightmare woman. At all events his eccentricities, whether affected or in-born are strong enough to make him the most artistic modern personality in the A. A. A., 131 boulevard Montparnasse, and the leading representative of the decadence in American painting. And the little clan, that assembles in his studio in the evenings—well, let them stuff this note in their short pipes and smoke it!

A BIT of patriotism—an imitation of which would be very desirable in this country—was shown by the Tretjakoff brothers in Russia, when they presented the city of Moscow with an art collection of 844 pieces, mostly paintings, and a building, free of mortgage, for exhibition, on the only condition that no admission would ever be charged. Only 83 pictures are by foreign artists, the rest are by Russians; Yeretshagin alone is represented by 230.